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Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| <i>The Eastern Shore, Virginia Raised-panel "Court Cupboard"</i> | 1 |
| MELCHOR, LOHR, and MELCHOR | |
| <i>Connecticut Influence on North Carolina Stoneware: The Webster School of Potters</i> | 15 |
| QUINCY SCARBOROUGH | |



Figure 1. Court cupboard, southeastern Virginia, 1640-1670. oak, yellow pine, and black walnut. HOA: 49 $\frac{7}{8}$ ", WOA: 50", DOA: 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". MESDA accession 2024-6.

*The Eastern Shore, Virginia Raised-panel
"Court Cupboard"*

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N. GORDON LOHR
MARILYN S. MELCHOR

The Eastern Shore of Virginia, the peninsula which separates the Chesapeake Bay from the Atlantic Ocean, offers an exceptionally fertile ground for various types of historical research. The two counties, Northampton and Accomack, that comprise the Virginia portion of the Shore have been occupied continuously since 1622. The three major conflicts detrimental to court records — the Revolutionary War, the War of 1812, and the Civil War — had relatively little impact on this peninsula, so the voluminous court records remain essentially intact. The county courthouses as well as other public buildings and private homes escaped destruction by hostile forces. These favorable conditions have also led to the survival of numerous household items on the Shore.

Another aspect of Virginia's Eastern Shore beneficial to the study of regional furniture has been the rather non-transient nature of the inhabitants as compared to other areas of the Commonwealth. For example, the Shore did not serve as a great highway to another locale, as did the Shenandoah Valley or the Cumberland Gap area. For this reason, a substantial quantity of the Shore's regionally distinctive raised-panel furniture has survived, providing us with the opportunity to examine it minutely. While many forms of furniture have been documented in wills and inventories as having been used on the Shore, the raised-panel furniture group, including clothes presses, blanket chests, flat-wall cupboards, bookcases, both normal and peaked-

front or "turkey-breast" corner cupboards, is the predominant type of regional furniture remaining. This group spans a production period from the early eighteenth century well into the nineteenth. The basic form and construction techniques of this Shore group remained virtually unchanged for roughly a century after its introduction. Apparently, the demand for this utilitarian furniture contributed to the continuity of style, innovation being unnecessary in a widely-accepted product. When a regional furniture style is so strongly persistent, it is often difficult to precisely date individual pieces within the group. However, fairly accurate estimates of construction dates can be made by the study of various characteristics such as tool marks, types of nails used, architectural details such as molding profiles and size of door mullions, massiveness of construction, hardware, and the occurrence of forms peculiar to certain periods.

In the southern colonies, as in other regions during the seventeenth century, court cupboards were a surprisingly common article of household furniture, judging from the inventories. These were major and prestigious pieces used for the storage and display of prized family plate and ceramics. Though numerous fine examples of New England court cupboards survive, there are unfortunately only two known southern court cupboards extant, both from eastern Virginia. The best-preserved and most important to this study is the example illustrated in Figure 1. Unlike the New England court cupboards, this Virginia piece has an open section at the top and an enclosed cupboard below. The arrangement is the reverse of usual New England examples as well as the second Virginia piece. (Fig. 2). The normal format for American court cupboards is derived from British tradition. Victor Chinnery, in *Oak Furniture in the British Tradition*, provides a comprehensive study of early English oak furniture including various cupboards. Chinnery, as well as other authors who have published studies of both English and Continental furniture, illustrates many court cupboards with an enclosed section over an open shelf; variant forms consist of two open shelves or even two enclosed sections. For contrast, Chinnery illustrates the open-topped Virginia cupboard and states that "the cupboard . . . is an extreme rarity . . . no other comparable pieces have survived to show this was . . . a local preference in the Southern Colonies." He further notes that "a very small number of such cupboards were made in England but not to such a degree that any consistent pattern is apparent."¹ Indeed, he does not illustrate any



Figure 2. Court cupboard, southeastern Virginia, 1650-1680, oak and yellow pine. HOA: 47 $\frac{7}{8}$ " , WOA: 50 $\frac{3}{4}$ " , DOA: 18 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Courtesy the Wallace Nutting Collection, Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut. MESDA research file S-8382.

comparable English examples. There are no other known American or Continental examples. Lacking any evidence to the contrary, it could be assumed that the unusual form of the cupboard illustrated here is an eastern Virginia development of the seventeenth century. If that is the case, this cupboard certainly is not alone regarding the early development of southern regional forms.

On the Eastern Shore of Virginia, as on the mainland, court cupboards were in relatively common use during the seventeenth century. By the end of that century, however, these medieval pieces were no longer in vogue. The court cupboard was gradually replaced in popularity by architectural free-standing corner and flat-wall cupboards and presses. The development of these new

forms may well have taken place in Virginia before 1700. However, since there are so few remaining early case pieces recognized as southern, it is difficult at present to speculate upon the nature of late seventeenth century transitional forms. However, tantalizing items such as the “large wenscott Cupboard 1 £ 5s” in a 1681 Norfolk County inventory² provide interesting clues. Nevertheless, some court cupboards on the Shore continued in use well into the eighteenth century. For example, the 1717 inventory of John Wise of Accomack County listed “1 old Cort Cubbard.” In 1723 the inventory of Matilda Wise of the same county mentioned “a Cort Table or Cupboard.” Similarly, “1 old Cort Cubbard” was noted in Ann Robinson’s inventory filed in Accomack County in 1727.³ While these “antiques” probably were not plentiful on the Shore after the first quarter of the eighteenth century, they certainly were in use. Consequently, at least some of the house joiners and cabinetmakers working on the Shore during this period, and probably later, must have been familiar with the form.

While conducting the research for the book *Eastern Shore, Virginia Raised-Panel Furniture 1730-1830*,⁴ two anomalous pieces of furniture emerged. The first piece is constructed in the form of a two-door clothes press (Fig. 3). The unusual feature of this press is that it originally had two small window lights at the top of each door, rather than the two panels currently installed. A window mullion separates these small panels instead of the stile normally found in panel frame construction on the Eastern Shore. The substituted panels, like window glass, are set into rabbets, while panels were usually dadoed. Window lights would serve no useful function in a clothes press. The interior of this press currently is lined with plywood, and any shelf arrangement could not be determined; the original purpose of this piece of furniture is therefore uncertain. The second unusual piece is a flat-wall cupboard (Fig. 4). This cupboard has a rather short glazed upper section which, when compared with the more typical Shore flat-wall cupboard (Fig. 5), gives the appearance that this piece has been reduced in height, though in fact it shows no alteration.

Both of these pieces were made near the close of the Shore raised-panel furniture period. It was initially thought that the press illustrated in Figure 3 was a unique special-purpose adaptation of the clothes press form. Similarly, the cupboard (Fig. 4), because of its simple lines and panel arrangement, was considered a single, somewhat naive interpretation of a flat-wall



Figure 3. Clothes press, 1780-1800, yellow pine throughout. HOA: 70 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", WOA: 54 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", DOA: 26 $\frac{1}{4}$ ". Photograph by J. Melchor. Private collection.

cupboard. A recent discovery on the Eastern Shore, however, has provided a new perspective on these seemingly anomalous examples of raised-panel furniture. The piece illustrated in Figure 6 is a refined flat-wall cupboard composed of eighteen raised panels; it was made about the middle of the eighteenth century by an accomplished house joiner. This cupboard also has a short glazed upper section, but it is not simply a naive aberration of the Eastern Shore norm. Judging from the care taken in executing



Figure 4. Flat-wall cupboard, 1810-1830, yellow pine throughout. HOA: 72 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", WOA: 47 $\frac{1}{4}$ ", DOA: 21". Photograph by J. Melchor. Private collection.



Figure 5. Flat-wall cupboard, 1780-1800, yellow pine throughout. HOA: 76¼". WOA: 41", DOA: 20". Photograph by J. Melchor. Private collection.

the panel frame assemblies, its maker was in the mainstream of raised-panel construction on the Shore. Further, it is evident from the elaborate arrangement of the panels that this artisan was well aware of the then-current regional tastes in architectural paneling and raised-panel furniture. This is quite evident in comparing the cupboard with a typical Eastern Shore press of the same style (Fig. 7).

In evaluating the new evidence provided by this much earlier cupboard, the authors became aware that Shore artisans were producing furniture for the general storage of household goods in addition to providing eye-level display of a limited number of items. This was precisely the function of the seventeenth century court cupboards. While the raised-panel pieces are presently classified as flat-wall cupboards (Figs. 4 and 6) and a modified clothes press (Fig. 5), they could equally well be considered as transitional forms of court cupboards, borrowing their basic format from the style of the court cupboard illustrated in Figure 1. The major difference between the earlier court cupboards and the eighteenth and early nineteenth century Shore transitional "court cupboards" is the glazing of the upper section of the latter to adapt them to later tastes and utility.

The key in differentiating between conventional flat-wall cupboards and Shore "court cupboards" is the visual effect provided by the proportions of the major structural elements. The court cupboard in Figure 1, which is the prototype form for the raised-panel "court cupboards," has a lower cupboard section which is essentially one and one-half times taller than the open top section. The proportions of the cupboard are square; that is, the height of the piece is about the same as the case width, which is normal for seventeenth century joined work. Although the ratios vary somewhat in the Shore raised-panel "court cupboards," the trend is similar; the width of the cupboard in Figure 6 is almost eighty percent of the height. While the glazed portion of this example occupies only about one-fourth the facade, the upper section of the cupboard in Figure 4 is slightly more than a third of the height of the base. In contrast, the lower sections of the conventional Shore flat-wall cupboards are never taller than the upper sections. In some instances, the upper and lower sections are nearly equal in height, while in others the upper section is taller than the lower. The overall height-to-width ratio of the usual flat-wall cupboards is generally two-to-one, which is normal for eighteenth century design.

Varying the proportions of these elements can radically alter the appearance of a piece of furniture. The Shore "court cupboards," with proportions much closer to square, appear to be more massive and considerably shorter than flat-wall cupboards of the same period even though their heights may not be significantly different. This effect is augmented by the visual weight of the taller bottom sections. Conversely, the taller upper sections and greater height-to-width ratio of the conventional Shore flat-wall cupboards results in a more slender, tall look.

There are also other subtle similarities between the seventeenth century cupboard and the Shore raised-panel "court cupboards." The court cupboard in Figure 1 has a cornice composed of the "nosed" or rounded overlapping edges of the top board, under which is fitted an ogee molding. The frieze is decorated with applied bosses, and the simplified architrave below is formed by a lipped cavetto molding. While currently-known Shore "court cupboards" have a less elaborate treatment at the top of their cases, other pieces in the Shore raised-panel furniture group have quite sophisticated entablatures. The architectural weight given the cornices of the later "court cupboards," however, is similar to the effect of the abbreviated entablature of the seventeenth century piece. Further, it is interesting to note that the upper element of the crown moldings on Shore raised-panel pieces frequently is composed of the shaped, overlapping edges of the top boards. A final important feature linking the early cupboard with the two transitional pieces is the visual separation of the upper and lower case sections. On the cupboard in Figure 1, this is attained by the lip-molded overhanging shelf edge. On the two known Shore "court cupboards," a heavy bolection molding divides the case. While bolections were in use early, they persisted throughout the eighteenth century on the Shore.

Despite the stylistic similarities between the seventeenth century court cupboard in Figure 1 and the later Shore "court cupboards," there are very basic differences in construction. The early court cupboard essentially conforms to classic medieval joinery techniques utilizing massive posts, nearly square in cross section, and heavy rails, mortised and tenoned together to form the frame. The flat, relatively thin recessed panels are dadoed to the rails and stiles. Surface decorations consist of turnings on portions of the posts, applied and cut moldings, and applied bosses and spindles. In contrast, the Shore pieces, usually made by house joiners, are constructed of individual raised-panel frame



Figure 6. Flat-wall cupboard, 1750-1770, yellow pine throughout. HOA: 66½", WOA: 52⅜", DOA: 19½". (Note: The shelf is a later addition.) Photograph by J. Melchor. Private collection.



Figure 7. Clothes press, 1780-1800, yellow pine throughout. HOA: 68½", WOA: 43¾", DOA: 22". Photograph by J. Melchor. Private collection.

assemblies which are butt-jointed or shiplapped together with nails to produce the final product. The rails and stiles of these panel assemblies are constructed of flat stock which is considerably lighter than the material used in the framing of the earlier piece. The raised panels, however, are usually considerably thicker than the earlier panels. The rails and stiles are mortised and tenoned together, and the moldings are struck directly on their inside edges rather than being applied as they were on the earlier cupboard. The panels fit into dados run in both rails and stiles. Decoration is generally limited to architectural moldings and the occasional fluting of stiles. Unlike the seventeenth century piece, oak is not used as a primary wood in the Shore raised-panel pieces.

These three⁵ apparent stylistic anomalies in a large body of Eastern Shore furniture do not conclusively prove that the seventeenth century court cupboard form persisted through the eighteenth and into the nineteenth century as a conscious imitation of an earlier style. The study *Virginia Raised-panel Furniture* has demonstrated, however, that certain styles were retained virtually unchanged for roughly a century, and both the visual and functional similarities of the three pieces to the Virginia court cupboard in Figure 1 cannot be ignored. Further, the documentary evidence of court cupboards in use on the Eastern Shore well into the eighteenth century cannot be overlooked. In light of these matters, it is certainly possible that these pieces represent a transitional furniture form as well as providing a clear demonstration of cultural lag in the region. Hopefully, additional examples and perhaps even a seventeenth century Eastern Shore cupboard will be discovered to further this theory.

Mr. and Mrs. Melchor and Mr. Lohr are residents of Norfolk and are widely known for their scholarship in Eastern Shore, Virginia furniture.

FOOTNOTES

1. Chinnery, Victor, *Oak Furniture The British Tradition* (Suffolk, England: Antique Collectors' Club, Ltd., 1979), p. 321.
2. Norfolk County, Virginia, *Deed Book 4*, 1675-1686, p. 116; recorded 11 May 1682.
3. Accomack County *Wills*, Reel 8, John Wise, 23 October 1717; *Ibid.*, Reel 8, Ann Robinson, 29 May 1723; *Ibid.*, Reel 8, Ann Robinson, 6 March 1727.
4. Melchor, James R., N. Gordon Lohr, and Marilyn S. Melchor, *Eastern Shore, Virginia Raised-Panel Furniture 1730-1830* (Norfolk, Va.: the Chrysler Museum, 1982).
5. A cupboard illustrated on page 162 of *Woods We Live With* [Schiffer, Herbert and Nancy, *Woods We Live With* (Exton, Pa.: Schiffer Limited, 1977)] is possibly related to the Shore court cupboards. This piece was not examined in this study, and its precise origin is not known.



Figure 1. A selection of stonewares from the Webster school, ranging in date span from the early 1820's to the late 1870's. Photograph courtesy the Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C., Fred Fiss.

Connecticut Influence on North Carolina Stoneware: The Webster School of Potters

QUINCY SCARBOROUGH

Fayetteville, North Carolina, located 110 miles upriver from the port of Wilmington, was the leading trade center of the Upper Cape Fear River basin in the first decades of the nineteenth century. The town was the state's principle mercantile conduit to Piedmont North Carolina. Towns and settlements as far west as Wilkes County and from Wake County south to the upper Pee Dee and Marlborough districts of South Carolina looked to Fayetteville for staples and supplies.

At the end of the eighteenth century, North Carolina had only one extensive regional pottery industry, and that was the earthenware production of the Moravian towns of Bethabara and Salem. The trade was established in the former town in 1756. However, farmer-potters in south Randolph County and northwest Moore County were also making earthenware in the eighteenth century, and possibly saltglaze stoneware by the early decades of the nineteenth century. A community of farmer-potters was also clustered along the Lincoln-Catawba County lines producing stoneware with alkaline or "ash" glazes. These two potting districts, the first in the southern Piedmont, and the second in the west central sector of the state, principally served their immediate regions. Many Back Country merchants, in fact, placed large orders each year with Fayetteville commission merchants for English or northern stoneware.

In 1818, James Seawell was granted the first franchise for a steamboat to operate between Fayetteville and Wilmington. The Haw and Deep River Navigation Company had been rechartered as the Cape Fear Navigation Company in 1815, and expectations

were high that the firm would quickly complete canals above Fayetteville to open river trade and further into the Piedmont. A plan was even drawn to join the Yadkin River to the Cape Fear by canals.

During the early decades of the nineteenth century, Fayetteville developed strong ties with the lower Connecticut River Valley. Silversmiths and clockmakers William Lord and Peter Strong emigrated to Fayetteville from Connecticut in the 1790s. Another silversmith, Alvin Wilcox, arrived in 1816. The pewterers Jacob Eggleston, Daniel Bass, William Nott, and Jehiel Johnson, all from Middletown, sought opportunity in Fayetteville. Riding chairmaker Gurdon Saltonstall emigrated from nearby New London. The merchants Elisha Stedman, Constant Johnson and John H. Hall, all from Middletown, operated large mercantile houses in Fayetteville. Many of the town's prominent families such as the Hinsdales, Starrs, and Judds were natives of Connecticut.¹

The burgeoning population of the Carolina Back Country offered a continuously expanding market to enterprising firms willing to establish themselves in the upper Cape Fear. One new Connecticut firm that sought its fortune in Fayetteville was the partnership of Robins and Savage. The principles of this firm may be credited with establishing the first large saltglaze stoneware manufactory in North Carolina; they also introduced New England shapes, glazes, and manufacturing techniques to the state. The establishment of Robins and Savage in turn brought another Connecticut family of artisans into North Carolina. One member of this family remained in Fayetteville, while a second member ultimately moved on to Randolph County to work with the noted Craven family of potters. These potters, the Webster family, were responsible for the unique work previously identified as the "bird and fish pottery." This extensive group of stoneware now attributed to their hand justifies a new designation for this ware as the pottery of the "Webster School."

ROBINS AND SAVAGE

An advertisement in the Fayetteville *Carolina Observer* for 5 December 1816 stated: "New Wholesale & Retail Store, Robins and Savage, Have taken the store lately occupied by Major Thomas J. Robeson, on the North side of Hay Street, 4 doors west of the State House; where they offer for sale, a general assortment of Dry goods, Groceries and Hardware." Among the items listed

for sale were "500 bushels Coarse Liverpool salt," an article necessary for making saltglaze pottery.² They offered "50 crates and hogheads [sic] of crockery and glass ware" in an 18 June 1818 advertisement.³ Other advertisements through 1817 and 1818 indicated that Robins and Savage were wholesale and retail merchants carrying a general assortment of dry goods, groceries, and hardware.⁴ The firm also engaged in land speculation. A "notice to Soldiers" offered "Illinois Army Lands, purchased by Robins and Savage, Fayetteville, N. C." was published 18 June 1818.⁵

Gurdon Robins married Julia Savage on 4 October 1809; she was most likely the daughter of Timothy Savage, Sr.⁶ It seems apparent that Savage later assisted in forming the partnership between his son-in-law, Gurdon Robins, and his own son, Timothy Savage, Jr. Both families appear to have been from Connecticut.⁷ Trading in the western part of the state, the principles of the firm obviously saw a lucrative opportunity to offer earthenware and stoneware to the Back Country.

GURDON ROBINS & COMPANY

A deed records that Gurdon Robins of Fayetteville and Timothy Savage of Wilmington purchased from David Hay "eight and five eights acres at the foot of Haymount" in Fayetteville for \$5,775 in the Spring of 1818. On 18 April 1818, the partners purchased a 132' X 252' lot on the North side of Hay Street from James Baker for \$132.⁸ This lot, along with an additional 23 feet purchased in January, 1819 from Robert Kelly and others, probably was the site of their store.⁹

The partners must have prospered; records indicate that "Gurdon Robins, esquire, was appointed Fayetteville's Agent for Aetna Insurance Company of Hartford" and had acquired a home site on Green Street along with several other tracts of land in the town and county.¹⁰ He also owned a lot adjoining the Richmond County Court House in what was later to be the town of Rockingham,¹¹ possibly the site of a store or warehouse to service the South Carolina trade.

Two years later, Robins had expanded his business interests into pottery manufacture, creating a new firm for the purpose. The first of its type in the area, the concern offered an extensive advertisement in the *Fayetteville Gazette*, dated 16 March 1820:

NEW ESTABLISHMENT
The subscribers having commenced the
MANUFACTORY OF
S T O N E W A R E

On an extensive scale in this town, now offer at Wholesale, at reduced prices, a large and universal assortment of Ware, a list of which may be seen at their store on Hay-street.

Among the advantages which will result to those who favor us with their custom in preference to purchasing abroad, are — they will have all sound ware — they will save the freight which is considerable — they will also save commissions and exchange, and will not be obliged to take as large an assortment as when they purchase their year's stock abroad — and lastly, they will be encouraging a domestic manufactory.

GURDON ROBINS & CO.
Fayetteville, March 16, 1820.
WHOLESALE PRICES.

| POTS. | JUG. |
|----------|---------------------------|
| 6 Gallon | 6 Gallon a \$12 per dozen |
| 5 do | 5 do 11 do |
| 4 do | 4 do 9 50 do |
| 3 do | 3 do 7 50 do |
| 2 do | 2 do 5 do |
| 1 do | 1 do 3 do |
| 1/2 do | 1/2 do 2 do |
| 1/4 do | 1/4 do 1 50 do |
| 1-8 do | 1-8 do 1 do |

Pitchers, Mugs, Churns, Kegs, Chambers, — Fountain and Common Inkstands (equal to Glass).

September 20, 1820.¹²

These prices were comparable to or only slightly higher than stoneware offered by Benjamin and James Duval in Richmond, Virginia in 1817.¹³

The 1820 *Census of Manufactures* provides more information regarding the size and scope of Gurdon Robins & Co. The census-taker reported that the company had been established the previous March (we are unable to determine if this meant 1819 or 1820), making stoneware with thirty-five hundred dollars capital invested. 2000 tons of clay, 100 bushels of salt, and 120 cords of wood, altogether costing seven hundred dollars, constituted the annual quantity and cost of materials. The firm employed four men and

two boys who collectively earned a total of twelve hundred dollars annually; one thousand dollars per year was spent on contingencies. Equipment consisted of one kiln, three potters' wheels, and a mill for grinding clay, and the annual market value of articles manufactured was five thousand dollars.¹⁴ If this gross income figure was not an inflated one, it would seem that the firm was prepared to compete with even the largest potteries in the state. It has been suggested that the success of Gurdon Robins & Co.'s stoneware production may have deterred the large Moravian operation in Salem from continuing their initial production of that ware.¹⁵



Figure 2. Map entitled *The Town of Fayetteville*, published in 1825 by John McRae of Fayetteville. MESDA RESEARCH FILE (MRF) S-2243.

The firm acquired at least two slaves through judgments against creditors, though they appear to have been aged domestics rather than laborers. In January, 1821, Robins apparently became the sole owner of the pottery factory, for Timothy Savage transferred all of his interest in the 8 $\frac{5}{8}$ acres at the foot of Hay Mount to Robins. In March, 1822, Robins purchased a two-acre tract on the south side of Russell Street in Fayetteville from Joseph Avery.¹⁶

In June of the same year, Robins sold his interest in the "Water Works" for \$500 and granted to William Nichols "the right of conveying water into the Town of Fayetteville," through

his lands, "upon a part of which lands stands the earthenware factory." Robins reserved for himself "all the water arising from springs on his own land." It was this easement and knowledge of where the "water works" was situated on the Nichols property that pinpointed the location of Robins' pottery.¹⁷ A map of Fayetteville published by John McRae in 1825 (Figs. 2,3) shows an unidentified structure on a small stream just west of the town line; this appears to have been the pottery building.¹⁸

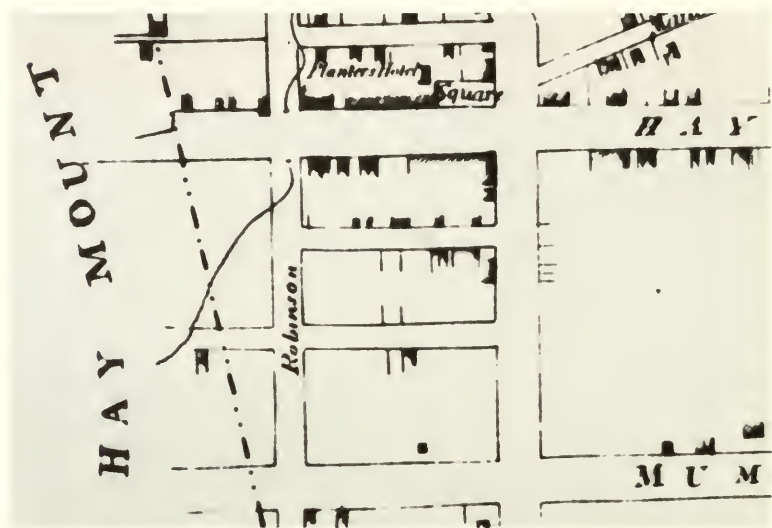


Figure 3. The Gurdon Robins & Co. stoneware manufactory was located on a creek just west of the town line; the building is situated slightly to the right of the "Y" in "HAY MOUNT" in this detail from the McRae map.

1823 witnessed a financial decline of the pottery. In February of that year, Robins signed a mortgage on his lot on Green Street to Charles McAllister, his associate and attorney, for McAllister's endorsement of over \$1,200 worth of Robins' notes at the United States Bank. It is possible that Robins incurred some of his debt by endorsing several notes for the silversmith Alvin Wilcox; notes on Wilcox totaling over \$3000 were held by all three Fayetteville Banks. For Robins' assistance, Wilcox gave Robins and John S. Stimets a mortgage on both his lots on Green Street and his pew in the First Presbyterian Church.¹⁹ Wilcox also had endorsed several of Robins' notes.

On 27 June 1823, Robins, described as a "Merchant," signed a mortgage deed on all five tracts of land he owned and "also



Figure 4. Kiln furniture (with the exception of the bottom right shard) recovered by the author from the Gurdon Robins site. MRF S-13163.

the Boat called the 'Lack' with all her tackle and appurtenances'' to the United States Bank and the Bank of Cape Fear to secure several notes amounting to \$5,541.00. By the fall of 1823, Robins' business failed and he returned to Hartford. On October 20th of the same year, "Gurdon Robins, now a resident of the City of Hartford and being from various misfortunes and losses in business" gave power of attorney to Charles McAllister to collect accounts against Erasmus Love of Richmond County, North Carolina.²⁰ The pottery may have operated for a short while under McAllister. Another power of attorney written in August, 1825,

gave McAllister the right to collect against Erastus Love and all other similar accounts receivable.²¹ McAllister paid off the note of \$1,200.00 to the United States Bank. On 28 November 1829, Robins, still "of Hartford," quit-claimed his interest in a lawsuit against Rathborn and Downs of New York to indemnify McAllister for paying off this note.²² The last record of Gurdon Robins at the Cumberland County Court House is dated 5 August 1834, and indicates that the trustees of both the United States Bank and the Bank of Cape Fear had sold the remaining three tracts of Robins' land to Oliver P. Stark.²³



Figure 5. A bottle neck shard found at the Robins site. MRF S-13163.

A search of Hartford records yielded no indication that Robins pursued any further interest in pottery manufacture. An 1828 Hartford Directory listed him as editor of the "Christian Secretary."²⁴ The 1830 Federal Census shows him living at 161 East Win[dsor?].²⁵ Both an 1838 Directory and the 1840 Federal Census listed him as "Rev. Gurdon Robins."²⁶ He had moved his residence to 26 Church Street by the early 1840s, and was operating a book store at 180 Main Street.²⁷ The Connecticut Historical Society has an ABC book published by Robins, in which he advertised that he published other school books such as readers, manuals, primers, arithmetic(s), and geography books. The *General Index of Land Records of the Town of Hartford 1639-1839* published in 1873 indicated that he served as town clerk.²⁸ Robins'



Figure 6. Handle shards from the Robins site. MRF S-13163.



Figure 7. Shards of jug necks from the Robins site. MRF S-13163.

obituaries recorded that he was born 6 February 1786, and died at the age of 78 on 2 January 1864.²⁹ He would have been 34 years of age in 1820, the time when he was active in Fayetteville.

TIMOTHY SAVAGE

Land records indicate that Timothy Savage of Wilmington was the only other partner in both the Robins and Savage

mercantile house and Gurdon Robins & Co. The Savage name was prominent in Connecticut. Hartford Land Records indicate that a Timothy Savage bought a lot there in 1802, and signed a mortgage on this property in 1838.³⁰ The 1820 Federal Census shows a Timothy Savage living in New Hanover County, North Carolina, as well as a Timothy Savage living in Cumberland County.³¹ The latter individual was probably Timothy Savage, Jr.; Cumberland County *Marriage Bonds* list him as having married Elizabeth Haddock of Fayetteville on 3 December 1818.³² As noted earlier, it is highly probable that it was this man who was in business with Gurdon Robins. Land transactions indicate that Timothy Savage, Sr. was a merchant in Wilmington and quite possibly financed the operations in Fayetteville.³³ Transactions in the *New Hanover Registry* indicate that Timothy Savage, presumably Timothy Savage, Jr., was again resident in Wilmington by 1827;³⁴ he remained in Wilmington through 1840.³⁵ No evidence has been found to date that indicates his connection with the pottery business was anything other than financial.



Figure 8. Jug base sections from the Robins site. MRF S-13163.

THE ROBINS KILN SITE

In the spring of 1982, the author located the Gurdon Robins kiln site in Fayetteville, and with the assistance of his wife and son, recovered a substantial amount of shards and kiln furniture. These shards provide considerable insight to the earthenware and stoneware pottery operation in Fayetteville, revealing in particular that incised-decorated ware was produced at the site.

The kiln site is located near the new Highsmith-Rainey Hospital building in Fayetteville. A high school had occupied

the site for many years, but had been demolished, and hospital construction and site grading was under way when the site was examined.³⁶ Over 1500 shards were found on the site; these were surface recoveries unearthed by tractors and rain rather than by any formal archaeological investigation. The presence of both potshards and kiln furniture (Fig. 4) clearly indicated the presence of a stoneware manufactory on the site. We strongly suspect that the actual kiln base was destroyed during the construction of the Fayetteville High School in the late nineteen thirties.



Figure 9. Shards from the same site bearing the stamped marks of Gurdon Robins & Co. MRF S-13163.

It seems apparent that local clays may have been used to make both earthenwares and stonewares. Both kaolin and a medium-red clay were found in abundance on the kiln site. The surfaces of the shards exhibit a full range of colors ranging from pale orange through light grays, yellows, oranges, and browns, representing the full spectrum possible using salt for a glaze at various firing temperatures. The predominate color, however, is a mottled dark brown obtained from salt-glazing over an iron wash. The interiors of many of the saltglazed shards are coated with an Albany-type glaze, possibly made from a local iron-bearing clay slip or engobe.

Some shards are unglazed, and are light orange possibly indicating from their thinner sections and softer paste the production of earthenware on the site. Gurdon Robins referred to the “earthenware manufactory” in at least one document,³⁷ and too many of these unvittrified shards were found to ignore the possibility that they were earthenware rather than underfired stoneware, though we cannot be certain of this.



Figure 10. *Incised-decorated shards from the Robins site. MRF S-13163.*



Figure 11. *Incised-decorated shards from the Robins site, the example on the left having underglaze cobalt decoration inside the outlines of the leaves. MRF S-13205.*

The greatest percentage of recovered shards were from various sizes of jugs. One shard seems to be from a bottle (Fig. 5) and another from an open pot similar to a flower pot or milk pan. All the jugs appear to have had “jump” handles; that is, the handle is attached to the neck at the top rather than the body. Many of the necks are tall, with reeded surfaces (Fig. 7), though a few necks have simple rolled rims. The bases were usually tooled with a shaped rib (Fig. 8). A large number of shards show portions of the company name. One shard omitted the “& Co.” line (Fig.

9), possibly indicating production after Timothy Savage sold his share of the firm to Gurdon Robins. Makers' names and handle terminals are often decorated with cobalt blue. Five shards have elaborate incised decoration (Fig. 10ff). One shard has a leaf decorated in cobalt blue, and another leaf appears to have both cobalt and an additional coating of iron wash. Yet another shard reveals portions of an eagle and shield (Fig. 12) decorated with an iron wash similar to an example made by Absolom Stedman of Hartford and New Haven about 1828.³⁸

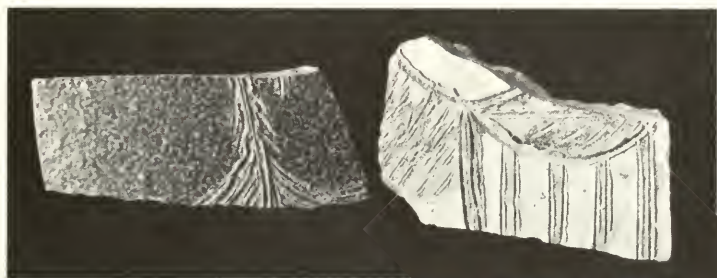


Figure 12. Incised-decorated shards from the Robins site, the example on the right representing part of an eagle-and-shield motif popular in Connecticut and other northern potting districts. MRF S-13163.

The forms revealed by these shards are parallel to Connecticut Valley stoneware styles. That is, they represent well-developed, high-shouldered ovoid jars and jugs; the jars have wide plain rims. The form of the jug handles and their method of attachment, as well as the tooled bases, are also characteristic of Connecticut ware. One intact example illustrates this classic shape (Fig. 13).³⁹ With a small base and wide shoulder, the jug has a decidedly top-heavy appearance. It has been suggested that this basic form was derived from Rhenish stoneware.⁴⁰

EDWARD WEBSTER

A search of the Cumberland County records has yielded the name of Edward Webster as the artisan who may be considered the principle potter for Gurdon Robins & Co. Webster was the second son of Stephen Webster of West Hartford and Prudence Butler of Middletown, Connecticut. According to the *History and Genealogy of the Gov. John Webster Family*, he was born 30 March 1801, probably in West Hartford. He most likely learned the potter's trade from his father's younger brother, McCloud Webster, who was in partnership with Horace Goodwin in

Hartford.⁴¹ This firm was known as "Goodwin & Webster" and operated from 1810 to 1840 at 18 Front Street in Hartford.⁴² It has been suggested that Goodwin & Webster had "laid the foundations for the first successful manufactory of stoneware in Hartford."⁴³ As a single man, and skilled as a potter, brickmaker, and carpenter, it is possible that Edward Webster was persuaded by Gurdon Robins to move to Fayetteville in 1819 to assist with constructing the kiln and new stoneware factory.⁴⁴



Figure 13. Three-gallon stoneware jug, signed "Gurdon Robins/ & Co. / Fayetteville/ III." HOA 16 $\frac{3}{16}$ "; diameter at base 6 $\frac{3}{16}$ ". MRF S-11993.

On 6 July 1820 Webster married Susan Jane Saltonstall, formerly of New London.⁴⁵ She was the daughter of Gurdon Saltonstall, a wheelwright and riding chairmaker who had

emigrated to Fayetteville from Connecticut.⁴⁶ The 1820 Federal Census for North Carolina lists Webster as a “head of family”; his household contained another male and a female other than his wife; the second woman aged forty-five or older.⁴⁷ The second male could have been his younger brother, Timothy Webster, of whom little is known. Timothy may have been one of the other potters working for Gurdon Robins; another brother, Chester, was also a potter.⁴⁸



Figure 14. Detail of the signature on Figure 13.

It is reasonable to speculate that Edward Webster continued to work for Gurdon Robins until the firm failed in 1823. There is no record of Webster's having held any shares in Gurdon Robins & Co. He remained in Fayetteville after Robins returned to Hartford. Cumberland tax records for 1824 and 1825 reveal that Charles McAllister was listing various properties for Gurdon Robins, while Webster was listed only with a 66' X 150' vacant lot on Haymount valued at \$20.⁴⁹ He probably rented his residence.



Figure 15. One-gallon stoneware jug signed "Edward Webster/ Fayetteville." HOA 25 $\frac{3}{4}$ ". The "Fayetteville" line is from the same stamp used to mark the Robins piece in Figure 13. Photograph courtesy the Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C., Fred Fiss.

It is probable that Webster continued to work at the pottery, which appears to have been operated by McAllister after Robins' departure. The 1827 *List of Taxables* indicates that in addition to the vacant lot, Webster by that time also owned an "improvement near the jug factory on Chicken Rd. valued at \$150." The 1828 *List of Taxables* further describes this property as "3/4 acre near jug factory, Hay Mt. \$150." The lot evidently had been part of Robins' original eight and five-eighths acres, though no deed for the section has been found. It is quite possible that Webster was in business for himself by 1824; he certainly was by 1827 when he became owner of the "jug factory" site. Business must

have been reasonably good, for the 1829 *List of Taxables* indicates that the value of the jug factory had increased \$200, and a new acquisition of 42 1/2 acres adjoining "E. Vann" valued at \$80.⁵⁰



Figure 16. Half-gallon stoneware jug signed by Edward Webster, showing a typical Connecticut Valley shape and glaze. HOA 11 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". MRF S-2762.

On 11 July 1830 Webster's wife died from complications in childbirth. The infant boy, Benjamin, survived until the fifth of September. The marriage, however, had produced five other children: Sarah Saltonstall Webster, born 9 September 1822; Gurdon Flower Saltonstall Webster, born 16 March 1824; Edward Webster, born 20 December 1825; Permelia Webster, born 1 January 1826, and William Saltonstall Webster, born 9 April

1828.⁵¹ The 1830 Federal Census accounts for these surviving children, showing a household of nine for Webster. Listed were two males under 5, one male between the ages of 5 and 10, one male between 15 and 20, and two males over 30 and under 40. There was one female between the ages of 5 and under 10; one female 10 and under 15, and one female between 40 and 50. The presence of two males over thirty years of age in the household suggests that Webster's brother Chester may have been resident there, though it is difficult to identify the male who was under twenty. None of these entries seem to have been the proper age for his wife, and it is likely that the census was taken after her death.⁵²



Figure 17. One-gallon stoneware pitcher signed by Edward Webster. HOA 11½", base diameter 4¼". This piece bears similarity to both Connecticut Valley and Rhenish German forms. MRF S-13208.



Figure 18. Four-gallon stoneware jug attributed to Edward Webster. Dimensions not recorded. Photograph courtesy the Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C., Fred Fiss.

Listed near Edward Webster's entry in the 1830 census was Margaret (Hubbard) Rounds, the widow of the late Joseph Rounds. She evidently was a neighbor also living on Haymount Hill near the "jug factory." Edward Webster married Margaret Rounds on 16 March 1831.⁵³ Mrs. Rounds had her own property; Edward Webster listed two lots for her valued at \$45 and a dwelling valued at \$250 in the 1837 *List of Taxables*. The family was resident in the dwelling listed. In March, 1832, Webster had sold forty-one acres on Locks' Creek to George Holmes; the revenue from that sale might have been used to construct the house.⁵⁴

A son, Charles Washington Webster, was born 7 January 1835.

A second son, Joseph Warren Webster, followed 1 March 1837,⁵⁵ just at the beginning of the economic panic of 1837. Like most other American communities, Fayetteville was seriously affected by the depression. Market prices for locally-produced staples such as turpentine and timber fell nearly fifty percent in a matter of weeks.⁵⁶ Edward Webster may have been among those hurt by the depression, for by the following year he began to sell his property in Fayetteville. On 22 August 1838 he sold one tract on Haymount to the Federal Government for one dollar, and at the same time Webster and his wife sold a second tract to the Government for \$25. These lots constituted part of the new United States Arsenal site. On 27 October 1838, Edward Webster signed a ninety-day deed of mortgage to George B. Atkins for \$300 "on a lot a little south of the Conduit of Water."⁵⁷ This mortgage was recorded in March Court for 1839; Webster may have forfeited this loan, for there were no property listings in his name in 1838.⁵⁸

Webster evidently moved to rural South Carolina in 1838. The 1840 Federal Census for South Carolina lists Webster and his family in Marion County.⁵⁹ Webster's youngest son, David Green Webster, was probably born there during the same year.⁶⁰ For the next thirty years, Webster was resident in Reeves Township, Marion County, in what later became known as Mullins Depot. The 1850, 1860, and 1870 census locates him there, listing his occupation as farmer or carpenter. The 1880 census listed Webster in the household of his son, Charles Washington Webster, in Graham's Cross Roads (later Lake City), Williamsburg County, South Carolina.⁶¹ During the several years following, Webster and his wife were variously living at Marlye's Mills in Randolph County, N.C., and at Graham's Cross Roads in Williamsburg County, S.C. In March of 1883, he was in Little Rock, Marion County, S.C.,⁶² possibly living either with his son Joseph Warren Webster or his youngest son David Green Webster, both of Little Rock. We have not been able to determine when or where he died.

The *Webster Genealogy* suggests that Edward Webster was primarily a potter, but states further that "he has followed various occupations — potter, carpenter, painter, cabinet-maker, brick-maker, wheelwright, steamboat builder and steamboat master on the Great Peede [sic] River."⁶³ It is unlikely that he made pottery while in South Carolina, though it is possible that he may have assisted his brother Chester while visiting Randolph County, North Carolina.

There are three signed jugs and one pitcher by Edward Webster. One bears the same "Fayetteville" mark used by Gurdon Robins (Fig. 15),⁶⁴ perhaps indicating that Webster initiated his own operation while still in the same factory. All four pieces have a salt glaze over an iron wash, and are essentially eighteenth century forms (Fig. 16), though they are not as high-shouldered as the signed Gurdon Robins piece. The pitcher, however, has a distinctly early appearance (Fig. 17). The similar glazes, incised band decoration, and the use of reeded necks and tooled bases of the Fayetteville-made Webster pieces parallel some of the early unmarked incised-decorated pieces from the Robins site. Close examination of the signed pieces reveals that Webster very likely made the four-gallon fish-decorated jug illustrated in Figure 18.

CHESTER WEBSTER

Chester Webster, who also moved to North Carolina, was the older brother of Edward Webster; he was born in 1799, probably on his father's farm in West Hartford. Like his brother, it appears that he was also employed by his uncle, McCloud Webster, in the family pottery business in Hartford.⁶⁵ Church records show that he married Lucy Francis, also of Hartford, on 29 June 1826.⁶⁶ One daughter, Lucy Maria, was born to this marriage on 7 December 1827; his wife died nine days later, on 16 December 1827. The *Webster Genealogy* notes that "soon after his wife's death, he removed from Hartford, and probably went at once to Randolph County, N.C."⁶⁷ It is more likely, however, that Chester joined his brother Edward's household in Fayetteville and, that he was the second male over thirty years of age in the 1830 Federal Census.⁶⁸ He probably worked with Edward for a while before moving to the interior part of the state. A history of Randolph County records that "a potter named Chester Webster came to North Carolina and turned pottery for Soloman [sic] Craven and his son Yancy Craven. A house was built across the road in which he lived and was later known as the Webster house."⁶⁹

Chester Webster's house was still standing as recently as ten years ago; it was located near Concord Methodist Church graveyard, west of the town of Coleridge. The Craven pottery was situated just east of the house site.⁷⁰ If Chester went to work for Solomon Craven as local history indicates, he must have joined Craven's pottery before 6 May 1833, since Craven is said to have

been killed on that date by a falling tree.⁷¹ Chester, however, had remained in Fayetteville long enough to court and win a new wife. On 13 November 1834 he married Elizabeth Guiton Smith of that city; she probably was a widow. No children were born to this marriage. Webster was again in Fayetteville in July of 1835, when he witnessed the marriage bond of his younger brother, Timothy Webster.⁷²



Figure 19. Shard of a jar rim found near the B. Y. Craven pottery site in Randolph County, shown with an 1877-dated intact jar from the same pottery. MRF S-13249.

The 1840 Federal Census reveals that both Chester and Timothy Webster were living in Randolph County at the time.⁷³ The 1850 Federal Census indicates that Chester, his wife Elizabeth, and a Sarah Ferguson, aged 12, were still residents of Randolph County.⁷⁴ Randolph County Deeds record no land purchases by Webster, and county tax records do not list his name.

Chester Webster definitely worked for Solomon Craven's son, Bartlet Yancy Craven. B. Y. Craven, as he was known, in addition to operating the Craven family pottery also ran a general store, made bricks, operated a blacksmith shop, tailor shop, and ran the family farm.⁷⁵ It is doubtful that he had time to make pottery himself. Craven's account book of 1853-1869 is located

in the manuscript collection of Duke University; while the account book is primitive and sketchy, it does provide a significant “window” into the operations of a rural enterprise in mid-nineteenth century North Carolina. The account book contains pages debiting Chester Webster for the purchase of goods and services from B. Y. Craven’s store. Webster was also credited by the gallon for turning pottery; he also performed other tasks on Craven’s farm to balance against his debts. The first book entry for Chester Webster was a debit: “1854, March 18, to bottoming 1 chair 12 1/2 cents.” On the same page are entries for “boarding a hand” and one for hauling clay. These entries suggest that Webster may have worked as an “inside contractor” in Craven’s pottery, a common type of arrangement at the time.

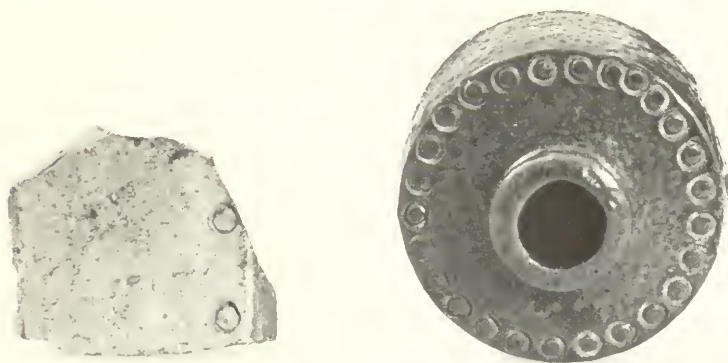


Figure 20. Shard from the Craven site decorated with impressed circles, possibly a plate rim, shown with an intact 1861-dated inkwell attributed to the same site. MRF S-13249.

It is possible, however, that the two men may have also been in partnership in the early years. An 1855 entry on page 26 of the account book shows a debit charge “to difference in ware taken to cedar falls by Mr. Mulenix [\$.75].” Another debit for 22 December 1856 records a “difference in goods at Fayetteville .65 + .20.” There is an 1858 entry for Webster’s wife, Elizabeth, revealing that she made several purchases of flour totaling \$2.55, and paid this off “by schooling.”⁷⁶

By August, 1857, Chester was receiving credit for turning ware at the rate of four cents per gallon. The following month, it was noted that he had turned 1215.75 gallons, averaging 173.68 gallons on each of the seven days he worked. A 16 December

1858 entry, however, indicates that his wage had been lowered to three cents per gallon. He continued at this rate through 1859, turning 3,289 gallons of ware; he averaged 219.27 gallons per day for each of the fifteen days that he worked for Craven that year.⁷⁷ It is interesting to note that Craven sold finished ware at prices ranging from ten to fifteen cents per gallon.⁷⁸ Webster's wages for 1861 ranged from four cents down to three cents per gallon, while some entries for September of that year were listed at six cents per gallon.⁷⁹ The higher rates may indicate wartime inflation.

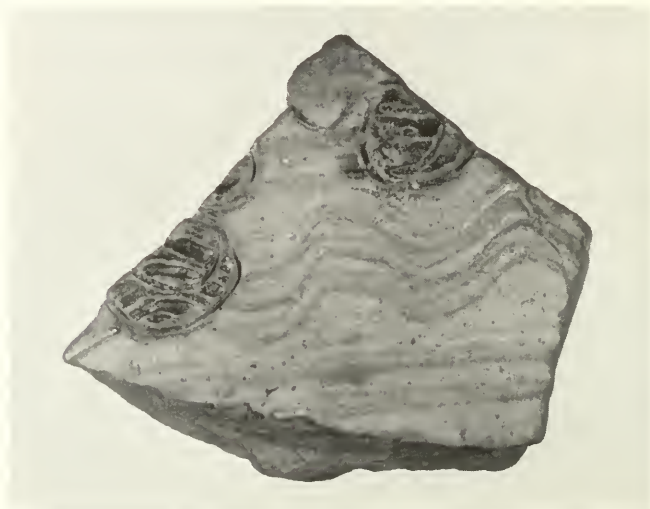


Figure 21. Incised shard from the Craven site with underglaze cobalt infill. MRF S-13249.

There may have been a certain amount of antagonism between Craven and Webster, as one book entry embroidered with a little Biblical expletive seems to reveal: "1862 Feb. 19 Settlement betwih [sic] B. Y. Craven and C. Webster and B. Y. Craven Dr. 71.65, Then shall the Lord say depart ye cursed into everlasting fire." In January of the same year, Chester was charged \$2.00 for eight gallons of ware for his own household; he paid \$1.00 for "6 lbs. government salt" in July of 1863.⁸⁰

The final entry for Chester Webster in Craven's account book seems to have been for "work done on Concord Church," and the entry notes that the Craven/Webster accounts were "settled up to Sept. 21, 1863."⁸¹ In all probability, however, Webster continued to work for B. Y. Craven for a number of years. The

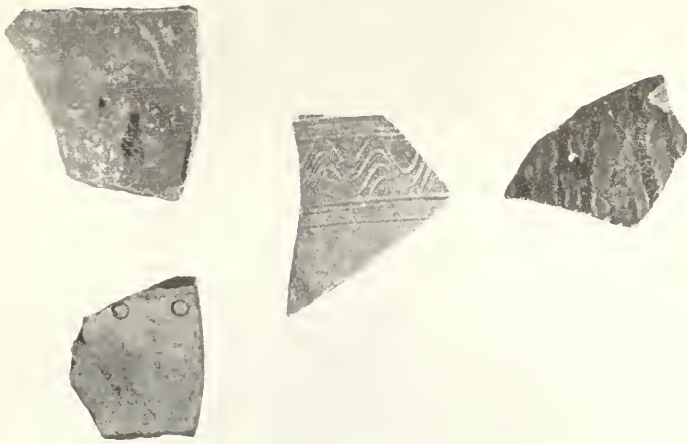


Figure 22. Four additional B. Y. Craven pottery site stoneware shards. MRF S-13249.

Concord Church cemetery is said to contain an undated tombstone for Elizabeth Webster, though the author was unable to locate this grave.⁸² The 1880 Federal Census records that Chester Webster was living in Little Rock, Marion County, South Carolina with Edward Webster's son, David Green. He is listed as David's uncle, aged ninety, and widowed.⁸³ The *Webster Genealogy* records that Chester "died at Little Rock, Marion County, South Carolina March 16, 1882, and his second wife died in Randolph County, North Carolina [in] 1893";⁸⁴ this information conflicts, however, with the 1880 Federal Census listing Webster as a widower.

The pottery site where Chester Webster worked is owned today by a descendant of the Craven family who was kind enough to show the author where oral tradition places the pottery shop. The site was located on a hill several hundred feet from a spring described in Dr. Clyde Craven's history of Randolph County. Numerous old bricks were scattered over the site, and the owner noted that "when they use to plow the pastures and garden space next to this site, they would turn up right many pieces of broken pottery."⁸⁵ Shards typical of Craven shapes were also found by the author on the banks of a nearby creek. One shard closely resembled the lip of the dated "1877" jar illustrated in Figure 19. Another shard found on the pottery site was decorated with

two impressed circles (Fig. 20), the same detail adorns many of the unsigned “Bird and Fish” pieces. Figure 21 illustrates a floral-decorated shard from this same site. A further examination of the B. Y. Craven site should produce additional shards with incised decoration of the same type.



Figure 23. Stoneware cream pitcher, the leaves decorated with an underglaze iron wash. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S-13204.

TIMOTHY WEBSTER

Little is known of Edward and Chester Webster's younger brother, Timothy. His birth date is not known, though he must have been at least three years younger than Edward, judging from evidence presented in the *Webster Genealogy*.⁸⁶ The author strongly suspects that Timothy was the male between age sixteen and eighteen listed in Edward Webster's household in the 1820 Federal Census. It is reasonable to speculate that Timothy had already received training as a potter, and may have come to



Figure 24. Four-gallon stoneware storage jar dated 1842. HOA 16¼", diameter at rim 7". Courtesy the Brooklyn Museum, Arthur W. Clement Collection.

Fayetteville to join his brother in the Gurdon Robins operation. On 1 July 1835, he married Elizabeth Gill in Fayetteville;⁸⁷ his brother Chester witnessed the marriage bond as noted earlier.

By 1840, he was a resident of Randolph County,⁸⁸ probably living with and assisting Chester at the time. The *Webster Genealogy* indicates Timothy Webster and his wife had six children, three boys and three girls, while they were resident in Fayetteville.⁸⁹



Figure 25. Stoneware rundlet dated 1846. LOA $9\frac{1}{16}$ ". Courtesy the Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C., Fred Fiss.

THE WEBSTER SCHOOL WARES

Twenty-one pieces of the stoneware formerly known as the "Bird and Fish" pottery have been recorded in private collections and museums; most of these have been photographed. Nine of these pieces are dated, making it rather easy to develop a chronological range of styles which includes the many undated examples. The entire body of work reveals a continuum of design from the beginning of the Gurdon Robins operation to the end of the B. Y. Craven period in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The development of regional style in these wares,



Figure 26. Detail of Figure 25.

however, is evident in the manner in which the classic Connecticut forms, glazes and decoration evolved in North Carolina. Even so, the influence of eighteenth and early nineteenth century Connecticut potting techniques is clear in Webster-attributed pottery dated as late as 1879.

In an effort to place the unsigned incised-decorated pieces in their proper chronological sequence, the cream pitcher illustrated in Figure 23 may possibly date as early as the large four-gallon fish decorated jug (Fig. 18). This small cream pitcher shows a definite resemblance to the signed Edward Webster pitcher (Fig. 17). The four-gallon "fish" jug also bears a stylistic resemblance to two signed Edward Webster jugs (Figs. 15 and 16). The balance of the pottery illustrated here appears to be associated with Randolph County manufacture.

The earliest date occurring on a storage jar, 1842, was incised on the body of a jar (Fig. 24) decorated with the earlier form of incised bird used by the Websters. Characteristic of the birds of this period is the heart-shaped wing and heavily-collared neck. Falling next in the sequence is a rundlet dated 1846 (Fig. 25) which is decorated with the same form of bird. A fronded plant similar to that on the cream pitcher (Fig. 23) was incised on each side of the neck, and the opposite side is decorated with a fish.

A four-gallon jar (Fig. 27) and a five-gallon jar (Fig. 30), the latter dated 1850, are closely related chronologically. The dated jar shows a stylistic shift in the detailing of the bird's wing, losing the heart-shaped form of earlier examples. These two storage jars

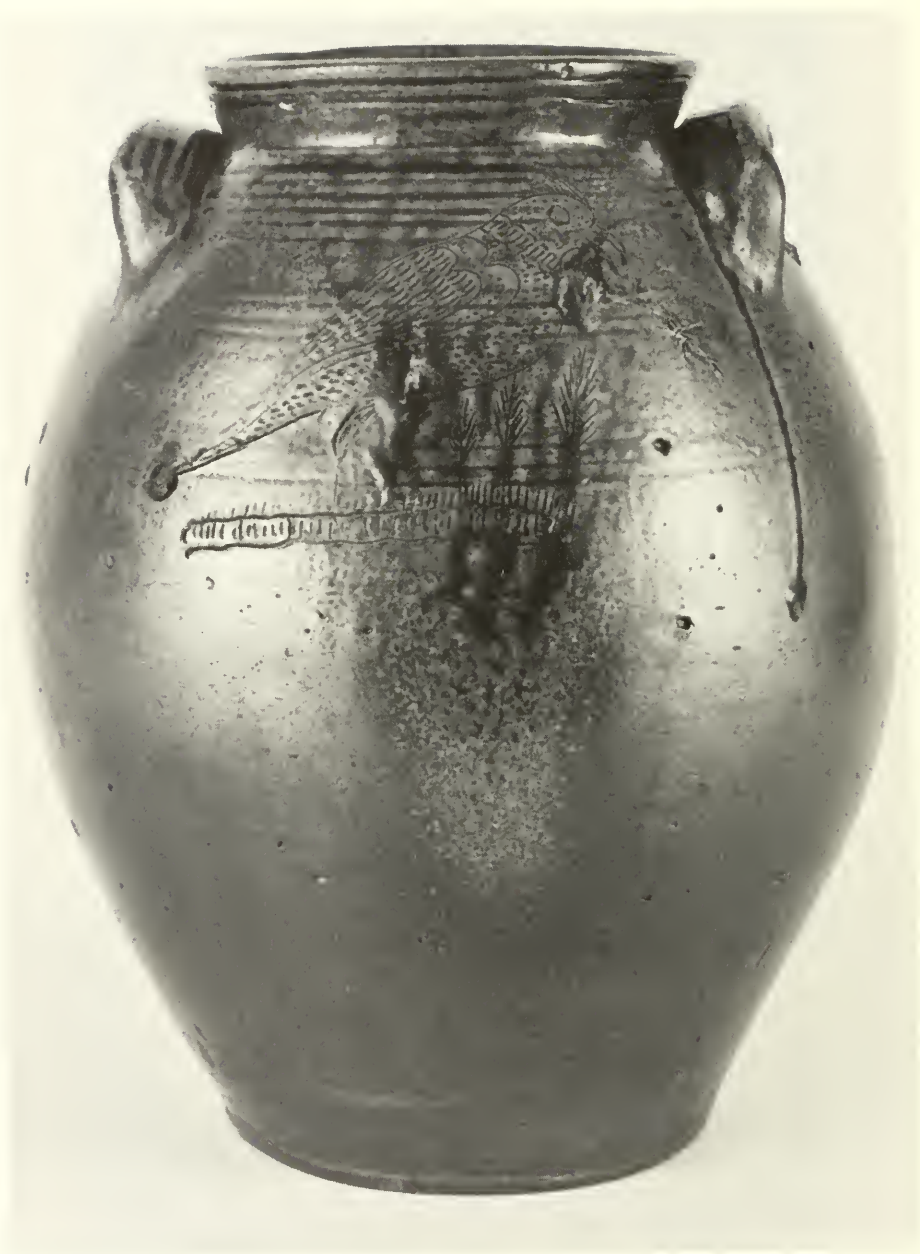


Figure 27. Four-gallon stoneware storage jar. HOA 14½", diameter at base 6⅞". MRF S-11994.



Figure 28. Reverse of Figure 27.

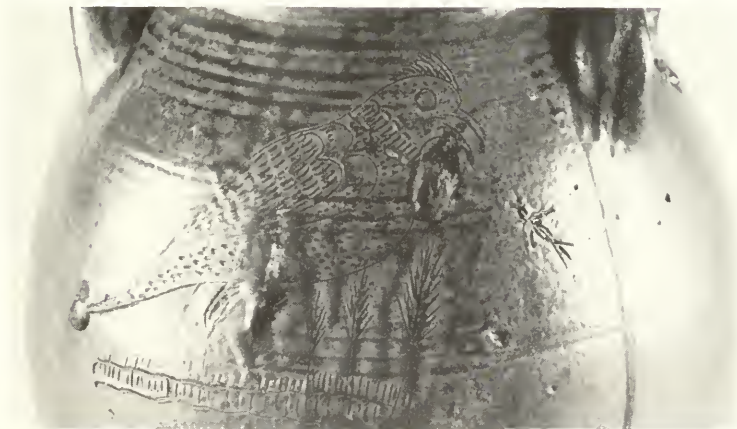


Figure 29. Detail of Figure 27.



Figure 30. Five-gallon stoneware storage jar dated 1850. HOA 15", diameter at rim 6 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". MRF S-11757.



Figure 31. Reverse of Figure 30.

appear to be the work of the same potter that produced all of the ware dating after the earliest intact decorated wares such as the four-gallon "fish" jug (Fig. 18) and possibly the small pitcher illustrated in Figure 23. The decoration of the ware which follows may indicate the more delicate execution of a second hand.

A pitcher dating about 1855 (Fig. 32) is decorated with an incised tree not unlike the palmetto depicted in the official seal of South Carolina. Flanking this design are later forms of both a bird and fish; the handle and spout are decorated with an incised leaf motif highlighted with impressed circles. Falling between this piece and an inkwell dated 1861 (Fig. 35) is a small pitcher (Fig. 34) decorated with the later form of bird as well as a rather Germanic flower with pointed petals. The inkwell, which has a band of impressed circles on its top, has an illegible inscription on the bottom which may have been that of its owner (Fig. 36).



Figure 32. One-gallon stoneware pitcher. HOA 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ ". MRF S-13139.

A small cream pitcher (Fig. 37) bears motifs similar to the two preceding pieces, while a large pitcher (Fig. 39) was also decorated with a Masonic emblem, the only example so treated. The shape of this pitcher is typical of Craven family pottery forms of the third and fourth quarters of the nineteenth century, and may be dated shortly before 1870.

Like this pitcher (Fig. 39), a two-gallon jug (Fig. 40) has the earlier bird form in addition to a pointed petal flower. Along with a small jug (Fig. 42), this piece has both the body form and neck shaping typical of the Randolph County potter J. D. Craven (1827-1895). The later style bird decorating the small jug in Figure 42 seems more typical of this potter, though he also employed the earlier bird with a heart-shaped wing.

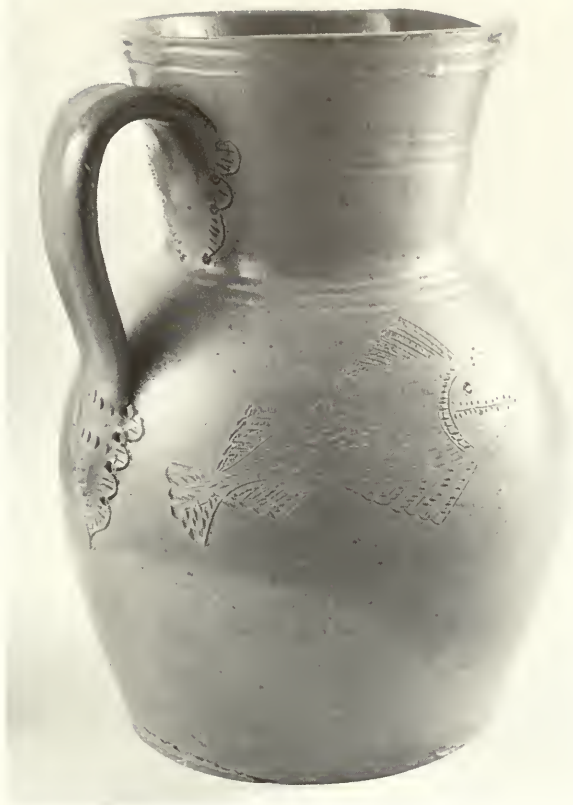


Figure 33. Reverse of Figure 32.

Also the work of the same potter, eight remaining pieces (Figs. 43 through 50) represent the latest group of Webster school ware, all dating from the 1870s. Five of these pieces are dated; the latest of them, a pitcher (Fig. 49) and a jug (Fig. 50) bear the date 1879. Despite their late production, these pieces retain elements of the earlier traditions. The jug illustrated in Figure 43, for example, has a body form that is quite similar to jugs from the Gurdon Robins period (Fig. 13). The 1879-dated pitcher (Fig. 49) exhibits a similar retention of a classic early shape. All of these pieces are decorated in a style typical of the later Webster wares; the only variant motif is an anchor incised below the handle of a jug (Fig. 50). Of the twenty-one examples examined, fifteen pieces are decorated with birds, and seven with fish; six pieces



Figure 34. Stoneware cream pitcher. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S 11997.

have both a bird and a fish. Nine are dated. Thirteen have decorated handle terminals, and thirteen employ impressed circles. Seven pieces are decorated with a pointed-petal flower. Between the earliest incised date of 1842 and the latest date of 1879, a time span of thirty-seven years, the same basic vocabulary of decorative motifs was employed, though the earlier undated ware has less decoration. As the final decades of production approached, in other words, the ware became increasingly more decorative. Early pieces have darker glazes, usually resulting from the use of an underglaze iron wash like the marked Edward Webster pieces. Later pieces have no iron wash and are lighter in color. The entire group is saltglaze stoneware; no intact earthenware examples from this tradition have been recorded.



Figure 35. Stoneware inkwell, dated 1861. HOA $1\frac{1}{2}$ ", diameter $2\frac{1}{4}$ ", MRF S-11214.



Figure 36. Detail of bottom of Figure 35.



Figure 37. Pint stoneware pitcher. HOA 4 $\frac{7}{8}$ ", diameter at base 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". MRF S-11996.



Figure 38. Detail of handle of Figure 37.



Figure 39. Quart stoneware pitcher. HOA 6½", diameter at base 3¼". MRF S-13138.



Figure 40. Two-gallon stoneware jug. HOA 14 $\frac{3}{4}$ ", diameter of base 6". MRF S-13137.



Figure 41. Reverse of Figure 40.



Figure 42. Miniature stoneware jug. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S-11995.



Figure 43. One-gallon stoneware jug. Dimensions not recorded. MRF S-13269.



Figure 44. Detail of capacity mark of Figure 43, showing the floral form typical of this school.



Figure 45. Three-quart stoneware jug, dated 1875. HOA 8¾", diameter of base 3½". Courtesy the Ackland Art Museum, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Ackland Fund.



Figure 46. Miniature stoneware jug, HOA 4 $\frac{5}{16}$ ". MESDA accession 2073-10.



Figure 47. Three-gallon stoneware jar, dated 1876. HOA 9 $\frac{7}{8}$ ". Courtesy the Mint Museum, Charlotte, N.C., Fred Fiss.



Figure 48. One-gallon stoneware storage jar, dated 1877. HOA 11¾". MRF S-13140.



Figure 49. One-and-one-half-gallon stoneware pitcher, dated 1879. HOA $12\frac{7}{8}$ "; one-half-gallon stoneware storage jar. HOA $8\frac{1}{4}$ ". MESDA accessions 2073-9, 3169.



Figure 50. One-gallon stoneware jug, dated 1879. HOA 9 $\frac{3}{8}$ ". MRF S-11804.



Figure 51. Stoneware water cooler by Goodwin and Webster, Hartford, Connecticut, 1810-1840. Dimensions not recorded. Private collection.

Stoneware examples made in Hartford illustrate the stylistic background of the Webster school wares. Two pieces from the Goodwin and Webster pottery, a water cooler (Figs. 51,52) and a jug (Fig. 53) represent the type of forms both Edward and Chester Webster must have been familiar with in their uncle's operation. Another Hartford piece by Stewart and Goodale (Fig. 55) has the body form, reeded neck, and style of handle typical of the signed Edward Webster ware. The incised decoration without the addition of underglaze cobalt also parallels the North Carolina work.

While none of the incised-decorated stoneware in this series is signed, it seems clear that all of the ware is the work of the Webster family. Decorated shards recovered both at the Robins site in Fayetteville and the B. Y. Craven site in southern Randolph County document the presence of Connecticut-trained artisans,



Figure 52. Reverse of Figure 51.

and the fact that both Edward and Chester Webster had emigrated from Hartford to North Carolina to follow their trade provides a documentary matrix binding this group of ware together. While little is known of Timothy Webster, it appears likely that he was connected with the production of this pottery as well. Chester Webster's association with B. Y. Craven is particularly significant, since many of the existing pieces were found within a twenty-mile radius of Craven's pottery. Since Edward Webster moved to South Carolina in 1838, an attribution of the bulk of the ware to Chester Webster, certainly beginning with the 1842-dated storage jar (Fig. 24) seems appropriate. It is not possible to determine, however, how much, if any, of this ware also reflects the work of Timothy Webster.



Figure 53. Stoneware jug by Goodwin and Webster, Hartford, Connecticut. Dimensions not recorded. Private collection.

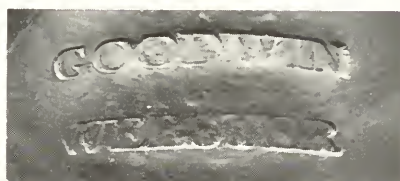


Figure 54. Detail of mark of Figure 53.

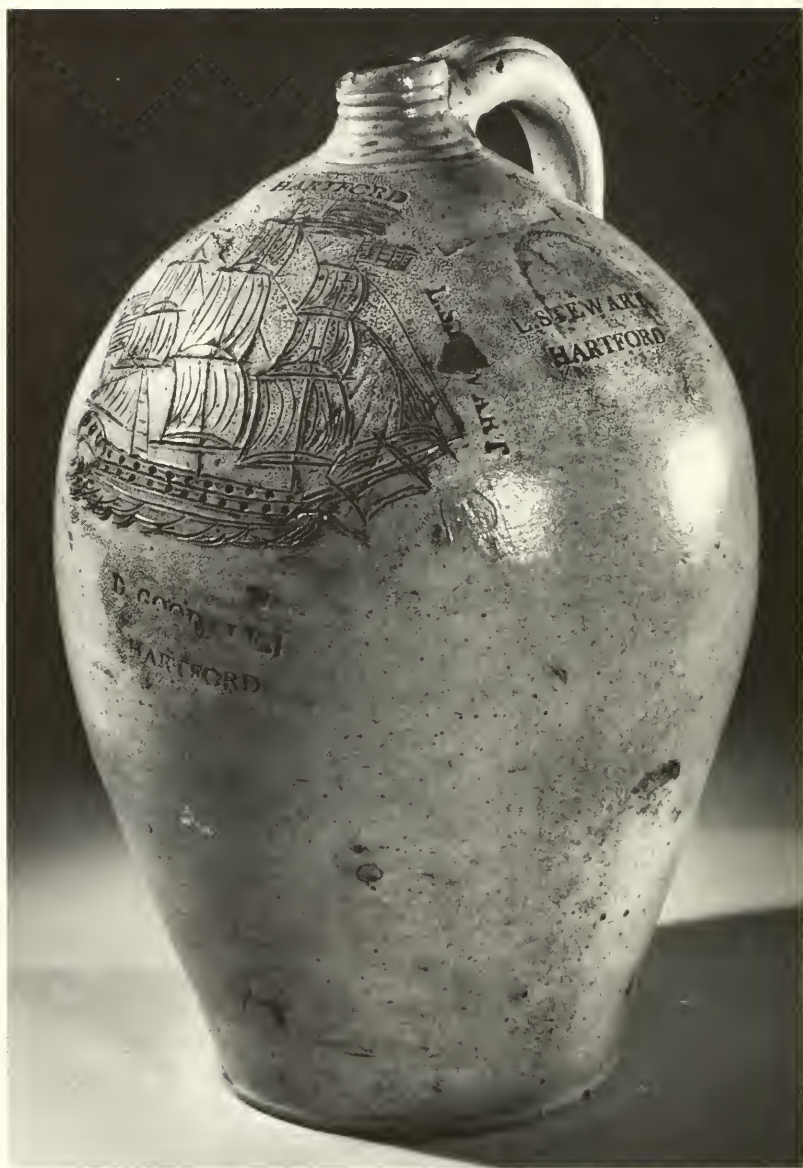


Figure 55. Stoneware jug by Daniel Goodale, Hartford, Connecticut, 1825-1830; during the 1822-1825 period Goodale was in partnership with Absalom Stedman, and this firm was located across the street from the Webster and Goodwin pottery. Dimensions not recorded. Courtesy The Henry Ford Museum, Dearborn, Michigan.

While the firm of Gurdon Robins & Co. was short-lived, the impact which the operation had upon the North Carolina pottery industry was extensive. Robins managed to introduce the large-scale production of stoneware to the state, and in doing so established a new ceramic tradition in the region through the Webster brothers. Of particular significance was the assimilation of New England forms and decorative techniques by a Back Country district whose pottery industry had already been well established. Almost fifty years after incised decoration disappeared from Connecticut stoneware, at least one North Carolina potter still found ready market for such whimsey, providing us with an interesting illustration of the persistence of tradition over a considerable span of time and geographic area.

Mr. Scarborough is a Fayetteville pewterer with a long interest in the decorative arts of the upper Cape Fear region of North Carolina.

FOOTNOTES

1. Author's research files.
2. Fayetteville *Carolina Observer*, 5 December 1816. The advertisement was repeated 30 January 1817.
3. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1818.
4. *Ibid.*, 27 February 1817; 6 April 1818; 18 June 1818.
5. *Ibid.*, 18 June 1818.
6. Middletown, Connecticut, *Middlesex Gazette*, 12 October 1809, p. 49; Hartford, Connecticut, *Hartford Courant*, 11 October 1809, p. 60. Collection of Connecticut State Library, Hartford.
7. Robins is listed in many Connecticut records. Timothy Savage owned land in Hartford: *Deed Book 23*, p. 366 of *General Index of Land Records of the Town of Hartford, 1639-1839*; 1790 *Federal Census, Index to Connecticut*. (Historical Society Manuscript, Middlesex County [Middletown]). Timothy Savage was listed as head of family.
8. Fayetteville, *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 30, pp. 34, 36. Haymount, the hill one-half mile west of the Market House and named for John Hay, was also spelled Haymont, Hay Mount, Hay Mt. and Hamont. North Carolina public records cited here and below are available in microfilm or manuscript at Archives Section of the Division of Archives and History, Department of Cultural Resources, Raleigh, North Carolina.
9. *Ibid.*, Book 32, p. 36.
10. *Ibid.*, Book 32, pp. 13, 134, 451, 453.
11. Rockingham, North Carolina, *Richmond County Registry*, Book C, pp. 145, 146.
12. *Fayetteville Gazette*, 22 November 1820.
13. Bradford L. Rauschenberg, "'B. DuVal & Co./Richmond': A Newly Discovered Pottery," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, Vol. IV, No. 1 (Winston-Salem, N.C.: Old Salem, Inc., 1978), p. 62.
14. *1820 Census of Manufactures in North Carolina* (Washington, D.C., National Archives and Records Service Microfilm, 1965).
15. John Bivins, Jr., *The Moravian Potters in North Carolina* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), p. 36.
16. Fayetteville, *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 34, pp. 213, 214, 427, 428.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
18. *The Town of Fayetteville, North Carolina*, published by John McRae, 1825. (Maps section, North Carolina State Archives, Raleigh).
19. Fayetteville, *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 35, pp. 113, 8; Robins must have anticipated financial trouble, for he tried to sell the stoneware factory in an advertisement placed in the *Carolina Observer*, dated December, 1822, and issued 2 January 1823.
20. *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 35, pp. 25, 112.
21. *Ibid.*, Book 36, p. 120.
22. *Ibid.*, Book 39, p. 14.

23. Fayetteville, *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 41, p. 229.
24. *Hartford City Directory*, 1828, published by Ariel Ensign, 1828. (Collection of the Connecticut Historical Society.)
25. *Index to the 1830 Census of Connecticut*, (unpublished: collection of the Connecticut Historical Society).
26. *Hartford City Directory*, 1838, published by Gardner, Hartford, 1838; *Index to 1840 Census of Connecticut*, (unpublished: in the collection of the Connecticut Historical Society).
27. *Ibid.*; *Hartford City Directory*, 1842, (published by Ariel Ensign, 1842).
28. Levi Woodhouse, *General Index of the Land Records of the Town of Hartford, 1639-1839*, Vols. 1 & 61 (Hartford, 1873). Collection of the Connecticut State Library.
29. Hartford, *Christian Secretary*, 2 January 1864, p. 674. Collection of the Connecticut State Library.
30. Woodhouse, *General Index*.
31. Dorothy William Potter, *1820 Federal Census of North Carolina*, Vol. XVII, Cumberland County (Tullahoma, TN, 1970), p. 61.
32. Cumberland County *Marriage Bonds*.
33. Early purchases of land in Fayetteville, i.e., *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 30, p. 36, indicated that Timothy Savage was from Wilmington. Deed transactions in New Hanover County reflect a variety of complicated financial undertakings for the elder Timothy Savage there.
34. Timothy Savage, Jr. gave a bond to the Royal Arch Chapter of Concord and Saint John's Lodge No. 1 of Wilmington in the amount of \$3,000 13 June 1821, signing for Timothy Savage, Sr. See also many other transactions in the *New Hanover County Registry*. It seems probable that Timothy Savage, Jr. traveled to Wilmington regularly on matters of family business.
35. *1830 Federal Census for North Carolina*, Bureau of Census (Utah: Accelerated Indexing System, Inc., 1976). *1840 Federal Census* (Columbus, Ohio: Gerald N. Petty, 1974).
36. Quincy Scarborough, "Connecticut Influence of Early Fayetteville Pottery" (*Fayetteville Observer*, 11 July 1982).
37. *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 34, p. 427.
38. Georgianna H. Greer, *American Stoneware: the Art and Craft of Utilitarian Potters* (Exton, Pa.: Schiffer Ltd., 1981), p. 225. Eagles were a popular decorative motif on American stoneware, particularly in New England during the first quarter of the 19th century. See also Harold F. Guiland, *Early American Folk Pottery* (Philadelphia: Chilton Book Company, 1971), p. 254 for an eagle-decorated jug by Daniel Goodale of Hartford, whose shop at 38 Front Street was close to that of Goodwin and Webster. See also Donald Blake Webster, *Decorated Stoneware Pottery of North America* (Rutland, Vermont: Charles E. Tuttle Co., Inc., 1971), pp. 89-90.
39. Author's collection.
40. Webster, *Decorated Stoneware*, p. 28.

41. William Holcomb Webster and Rev. Melville Reuben, *History and Genealogy of the Gov. John Webster of Connecticut* (Rochester, N.Y.: 1915), pp. 444, 939, 445, 447. Hereinafter cited as *Webster Genealogy*. This information was compiled while Edward Webster was still living; Edward furnished biographical information on his own family.
42. Webster, *Decorated Stoneware*, p. 225; *Hartford City Directory*, 1828.
43. Laura Woodside Watkins, *Early New England Potters and Their Wares*, 2nd ed. (Hamden, Conn.: Shoe String Press, Archon Books, 1968), p. 195.
44. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939.
45. Cumberland County *Marriage Bonds*.
46. The *Index of the 1790 Census for Connecticut* indicates that a Gurdon Saltonstall was living in New London. This may have been the father of the North Carolina artisan, for the *1790 Census for North Carolina* shows a Gurdon F. Saltonstall living in Fayetteville. James Craig's *Arts and Crafts in North Carolina* (Winston-Salem: The Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts, 1965), pp. 157, 159, 165 records Saltonstall as a "chair-maker" (riding chairmaker), wheelright, and inventor. According to the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, he was granted four patents for cotton cleaners and gins, the patents dated 21 August 1801, 4 January 1803, and 14 May 1803.
47. Potter, the *1820 Federal Census of North Carolina*, p. 67.
48. Timothy Webster is listed in the *Webster Genealogy* on p. 939 following entries for Edward and two sisters; this would seem to indicate that he was at least three years younger than Edward, though no birth date for Timothy is recorded. *Ibid.*, pp. 938-939.
49. Cumberland County *List of Taxables* for 1824 and 1825.
50. *Ibid.*, 1827, 1828, 1829.
51. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939; *Fayetteville Journal*, 4, July 1830.
52. *1830 Federal Census*, Cumberland County. Although the 1830 census affidavit was signed and dated 1 June 1830, such records were often submitted at a later date and then back-dated by census marshals. There were no females in Edward's household that seem to fit Susan Jane Webster's age bracket.
53. Cumberland County *Marriage Bonds*.
54. Cumberland County *List of Taxables*, 1837. The *Lists of Taxables* for 1833-1835 are not legible. *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 59, p. 82; this deed, which recorded the sale of the property to George Holmes, was not recorded until 1869.
55. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939.
56. Harry L. Watson, *Jacksonian Politics and Community Conflict: The Emergence of the Second American Party System in Cumberland County, North Carolina* (Baton Rouge, 1981), p. 246.
57. *Cumberland County Registry*, Book 42, pp. 358, 359, 412.
58. Cumberland County *List of Taxables*, 1838.
59. *Population Schedules of the United States, 1840*, South Carolina, Vol. 4 (National Archives Microfilm Publication, 704, Roll 513), p. 214.

60. The *Webster Genealogy* gives no birth date. The *1850 Federal Census* shows his age at 10 years.
61. *Population Schedules of the United States, 1850*, South Carolina (432, Roll 855); *Ibid.*, 1860, South Carolina (653, Roll 1223, Vol. 6, 1-211); *Ibid.*, 1870, South Carolina. Information from the 1880 Census was provided by Mary R. Reid, a Williamsburg County, South Carolina historian.
62. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939.
63. *Ibid.*, p. 939.
64. Collection of the Mint Museum, formerly owned by the Seagrove Potters Museum. Both the type face and spacing of "Fayetteville" is the same as the Robins mark; the tail serif on the letter "y" provides a particularly strong comparison, as did careful measurement.
65. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 938.
66. *First Church Records*, Vol. 1 (Connecticut State Library index card files on vital statistics, West Hartford), p. 199.
67. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939.
68. *1830 Federal Census*, Cumberland County.
69. Randolph County research compiled by Dr. Clyde Craven, and copied from the files of the historian Mrs. A. C. Cox of Randolph County by Bob Armfield.
70. The site described by Dr. Clyde Craven was shown to the author by the ceramics instructor Bob Armfield of Montgomery Technical Institute.
71. Correspondence between the author and Bob Armfield 15 August 1983; information was furnished to Mr. Armfield by Mrs. A. C. Cox.
72. Cumberland County *Marriage Bonds*.
73. *1840 Federal Census*, Randolph County, North Carolina.
74. *1850 Federal Census, Index to Randolph County* (Wilkesboro, N.C.: compiled by Mrs. Nancy Williams Simpson).
75. Bartlet Y. Craven *Account Book* (Manuscript Department, Collection of Duke University Library, Durham, N.C.). Hereinafter cited as B. Y. Craven's *Account Book*.
76. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 38, 44-45
77. *Ibid.*, pp. 51, 59.
78. *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 60. See purchases made by E. M. Whitehead of 717 gallons ware in 1860, unpaginated entry.
79. *Ibid.*, credit page for 1861-62, unpaginated entry.
80. *Ibid.*, unpaginated entry.
81. *Ibid.*, last full page in the book. There are many pages torn and missing from this account book.
82. Mrs. J. S. Welborn, *North Carolina Tombstones, Vol. II* (High Point, 1935).
83. *1880 Population Schedule of South Carolina* (U.S. National Archives & Record Service, Reel 1234).
84. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939.
85. Conversation with Philip Cox, 18 March 1894, on the site.
86. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939.

87. *Cumberland County Marriage Bonds.*
88. *Index of the 1840 Federal Census of North Carolina*, Gerald N. Petty (Columbus, Ohio: 1974).
89. *Webster Genealogy*, p. 939.

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